

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 INRE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9651

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 7249

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, RP

SUBJECT: HERRERA CASE: CHURCH INTEREST

REF: MANILA 7240 (LIMDIS) AND PREVIOUS

1. EVENING MAY 12, EMBOFF CALLED ON CARDINAL SIN TO DISCUSS HERRERA CASE. EMBOFF TOLD CARDINAL CHARGE HAD INSTRUCTED HIM CONSULT WITH HIM AND REVIEW STATE OF PLAY. EMBOFF STRESSED THAT WE APPRECIATED SIN INFORMED ON ALMOST EVERYTHING THAT WENT ON IN MANILA AND THAT WE WERE NOT PRESUMING TO ADVISE HIM ON HOW TO HANDLE MATTER, BUT IN VIEW OF SERIOUSNESS OF CASE AND HIGH LEVEL USG INTEREST, WE WANTED TOUCH BASE WITH HIM. EMBOFF THEN ADVERTED TO CHARGE'S DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT AND HIS OWN EXPERIENCE AT BICUTAN EARLIER IN THE DAY. SIN REPLIED HE HAD COPY OF RODRIGO LETTER, BUT HAD NOT YET READ IT. BISHOP GAVIOLA, MILITARY VICAR, IS CURRENTLY INVESTIGATING CASE. CARDINAL SAID THAT IF INVESTIGATION REVEALS TORTURE, "YOU WILL HEAR ME SCREAM."

2. CARDINAL EXPRESSED PLEASURE AT HIGH LEVEL USG INTEREST IN CASE SINCE HE FELT MARCOS NOW "SOMEWHAT SCARED AND UNCERTAIN" BECAUSE OF COLLAPSE OF HIS MINDANAO NEGOTIATIONS. CARDINAL
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SAID MARCOS NEEDED SOMEONE POWERFUL FROM OUTSIDE TO BRING HIM TO BOOK ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. CHURCH COULD NOT DO IT ALONE. CARDINAL ASKED THAT WE STAY IN TOUCH ON QUESTION.

3. COMMENT: CARDINAL MET WITH EMBOFF ON FAIRLY SHORT NOTICE AND LEFT MEETING WITH BUSINESSMEN TO CONSULT IN HIS STUDY FOR ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES. AS ALWAYS, HE WAS AFFABLE AND JOLLY,

BUT EMBOFF HAD IMPRESSION HE WAS A TRIFLE RESTIVE WHEN HE APPARENTLY THOUGHT EMBOFF WAS GOING TO MAKE DIRECT REQUEST FOR SOME SORT OF INTERVENTION. CARDINAL DOES NOT LIKE TO BE CROWDED. HE RELAXED WHEN IT WAS CLEAR PRIMARY PURPOSE OF CALL WAS INFORMATIVE. IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT GAVIOLA INVESTIGATION WILL TURN UP. GAVIOLA HAS WORKED WITH MRS. HERRERA ON SQUATTER PROBLEM, BUT RECENTLY HAS BEEN CRITICIZED BY CHURCH ACTIVISTS FOR HAVING BECOME "POLITICAL PRELATE" TOO CLOSE TO MARCOSES. FYI - GAVIOLA WAS REPORTEDLY MARCOSES' CANDIDATE FOR MANILA ARCHBISHOP IN EARLY '74, BUT LOST OUT TO SIN. END FYI. EVEN SHOULD GAVIOLA ADVISE SIN MRS. HERRERA WAS TORTURED, WE ARE NOT CERTAIN SIN WILL SPEAK OUT -- AT LEAST IN PUBLIC -- ALTHOUGH PRIVATE DISCUSSION MAY PROVE MORE EFFECTIVE. HIS LAST PUBLIC COMMENTS ON TORTURE WERE IN LATE 1974 (ARCE/ALVAREZ CASE). MOREOVER, MRS. HERRERA IS NOT CLERIC; HAS COMMON-LAW HUSBAND; AND IS CLOSE TO CERTAIN CHURCH ACTIVISTS OF WHOM SIN DISAPPROVES. IN ANY EVENT, WE HAVE PUT OUR INTEREST IN THIS CASE ON THE RECORD WITH HIS EMINENCE. HOPEFULLY OUR STRONG STAND WILL REINFORCE HIS UNDOUBTED DESIRE SEE JUSTICE DONE IN HERRERA CASE.

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